

## PART VI

## Livestock, Dairying and Poultry

General Importance

Livestock farming is of secondary importance in Chelan County agriculture. Livestock and livestock products sold off farms in 1954 amounted to only about \$680,500 compared with \$26,961,000 for tree fruits and other crops. Chelan County ranks 33rd in the state in value of livestock products sold off farms. Specialization in fruit farming with most of the cultivated farm land in orchards has resulted in a small scale livestock industry. Out of 1,875 farms only 41 are of the dairy type, 65 of the poultry type and 89 of the general livestock type.

Livestock Trends

Measured in numbers and types of animals, livestock raising has changed considerably since 1920. The value of livestock on farms has decreased in value, being \$858,000 in 1920 and \$745,000 in 1950, reflecting a lowered livestock population. There has been a considerable decrease in milk cows, hogs,

Total Value of Chelan County Livestock: \$789,402

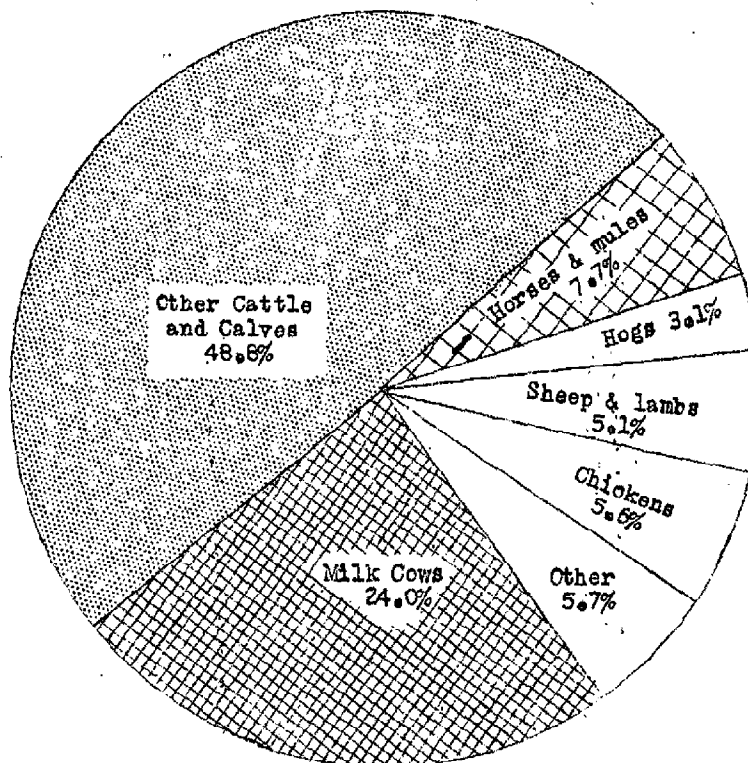


Figure 11.- Value of Livestock on Farms  
Chelan County, 1950.  
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture)

horses and chickens since 1920. In recent years, since 1939, the most marked livestock trend has been an increase in beef cattle and sheep.

#### Cattle: Beef and Dairy Farming

The raising of beef and dairy cattle forms the major type of livestock farming. Cattle are kept on 500 to 600 farms, or about one-third of all the farm places in Chelan County. Only 200 to 300 farms, however, make annual sales of cattle. In 1954 Chelan was one of the minor cattle counties of the state, ranking 35th in numbers of cattle on farms.

The trend in cattle has been upward since 1939 in two general cycles. In the World War II cycle, cattle numbers went from 5,000 in 1939 to 7,800 in 1944, because of high prices and strong demand for beef. Another cycle started with the Korean War and high national income of the early 1950's. Numbers increased from 5,300 in 1950 to a peak of 8,800 in 1956. The upward trends were in the beef breeds and were accompanied by sharp down trends in dairy cattle. During labor shortages and periods of high employment in the Wenatchee-Chelan area, beef farming was found to be more profitable than dairying, which requires more man hours of labor. Dairy cattle have decreased steadily since the peak of 5,700 head in 1942, being estimated at a low of 2,000 head in 1956.

Table 27.- Cattle on Farms  
Chelan County, 1939-1956

Year	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	5,000	500	4,500
1940	6,000	1,100	4,900
1941	6,100	900	5,200
1942	7,000	1,300	5,700
1943	7,500	2,100	5,400
1944	7,800	2,400	5,400
1945	7,300	2,400	4,900
1946	7,600	3,200	4,400
1947	7,300	3,900	3,400
1948	7,000	3,900	3,100
1949	6,100	3,100	3,000
1950	5,300	2,300	3,000
1951	6,000	3,100	2,900
1952	7,000	4,500	2,500
1953	7,200	4,700	2,500
1954	7,600	5,300	2,300
1955	7,900	5,700	2,200
1956	8,800	6,800	2,000

Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, AMS, Agric.  
Estimates, State of Washington, 1939-1956.

Dairying has declined markedly in recent years. In 1954 less than 50 farms were selling whole milk compared to over a hundred in 1949. Milk cows decreased by a third in the same period. Chelan milk production dropped from 3,600,000 pounds per year to 2,700,000. The value of dairy products sold also dropped 8 percent. While dairy herds have been reduced there has been a general improvement in their quality and care, resulting in higher milk yields per dairy farm.

Most of the cattle are raised in the Wenatchee Valley and Columbia River benchlands. About 320 farms had a total of 4,000 head in 1954 in the valley area including Malaga, Wenatchee, Cashmere, Dryden and Leavenworth. There were about 1,000 head distributed over 47 farms in the Chelan Valley. In the Entiat Valley there were 4 farms with a total of 600 head. Average herds are larger in the Chelan and Entiat Valleys. Dairy cattle are mainly concentrated in the Wenatchee-Cashmere area.

### Sheep

The raising of sheep has been increasing slightly since 1940. In earlier decades sheep were more numerous and important, but their number declined from 4,650 head in 1920 to a low of only 434 head in 1939. Since then there has been an increase to about 2,800 head. In 1954 sheep and lambs were being raised on 43 farms, and 23 farms marketed a combined total of 2,370 sheep and lambs and 15,800 pounds of wool during that year.

Over two-thirds of the sheep are found in the southeastern corner of Chelan County in the South Wenatchee-Malaga area. The 1954 Census enumerated 2,140 head in this district on six farms, an average of about 350 head per farm. In the Entiat, Chelan and upper Wenatchee Valleys flocks were smaller, ranging from 2 to 88 head. Many sheep are moved considerable distances to summer ranges in the Chelan and other National Forests and back to winter quarters in the valleys. Winter stall feeding of sheep is one of the cost items which has discouraged a large expansion of sheep. Winter pasture is limited in the lowland area.

Table 28.6 Hogs, Sheep, Horses and Mules  
Chelan County, 1939-1954

Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses & Mules (head)
1939	2,170	434	1,613
1944	1,926	1,620	1,640
1949	1,202	2,372	1,414
1954	903	2,817	952

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

### Hogs

There has been a gradual decrease of interest in raising of hogs and pigs. Both market and home-use raising of pork has dropped off since 1920 when there were 3,380 head. By 1954 swine were down to only 903 head and were kept on

only 192 farms. Sales amounted to 590 head marketed by a total of 56 farms. Most hogs in Chelan County are raised by feeders and livestockmen close to Wenatchee. Some operators specialize in hog-feeding using barley, oats and ground alfalfa purchased locally, supplemented by cooked food wastes from city restaurants and institutions. In common with most other Washington farming regions, the pioneer and early custom of home butchering and curing of pork has been abandoned. Farms with two to five head raised for home use are no longer common.

### Poultry Farming

Compared with other Washington counties, poultry farming is on a minor scale in Chelan County. In 1954 Chelan ranked 22nd in the state in the value of poultry and poultry products sold off farms. There were 297 farms which made sales of poultry and eggs during 1954 and their total cash returns amounted to \$180,000. With the exception of turkey raising, production in the poultry farming industry has declined below 1939 levels.

In recent years, chicken eggs and turkeys have led as the major sales items from the poultry farms. Although egg production was down to 192,600 dozen in 1954, their sales accounted for about half of the gross returns

Total Value of Poultry and Poultry Products Sold  
in 1954 - \$180,316

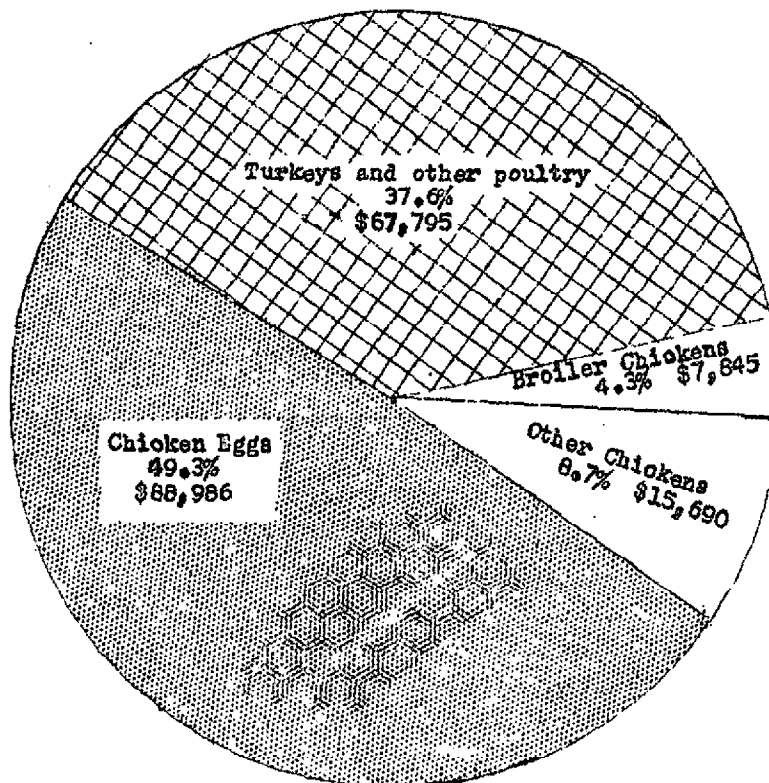


Figure 12.- Divisions of Chelan County Poultry Industry  
By Products Sold off Farms in 1954.  
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture)

received by poultry farmers. Sales of eggs were made off 235 farms in 1954, compared to 363 farm operators selling eggs in 1949.

Table 29.- Chickens, Egg Production and Turkeys Raised  
Chelan County, 1939-1954.

Year	Chickens (birds)	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys Raised (birds)
1939	46,582	372,320	1,935
1944	59,439	554,913	3,806
1949	34,729	169,319 $\frac{1}{2}$	10,344
1954	35,735	192,632 $\frac{1}{2}$	12,550

$\frac{1}{2}$  Eggs sold by farmers; does not include eggs consumed on farms.

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Warm and dry summer climatic conditions, improved markets and accumulated experience have favored an expansion of commercial turkey raising. In 1954 Chelan was 13th in Washington turkey raising. The production of turkeys was limited to about 31 farms in 1939, raising a total of 2,000 birds. By 1954 nearly 60 farms were in production, and their total turkey crop was up to 12,500. Turkeys make up about one-third of the poultry industry at the present time. By 1954 there were eleven farms specializing in turkey eggs and poults and breeding stock. The light breeds of turkeys are preferred, making up about two-thirds of the birds sold.

### Bees and Honey

Beekeeping is an important minor livestock industry which helps to insure good pollination of the large Chelan fruit orchard acreage. According to the last Census enumeration of bees, taken in 1949, there were 54 farms keeping beehives. The number was small, amounting to only 336 hives which yielded a total of 1,900 pounds of honey and beeswax. In earlier Censuses, beehives were more numerous and honey production was greater. In 1920 there were 665 hives yielding 7,360 pounds. In recent years a number of beekeepers in other counties, particularly from western Washington, have trucked bee colonies into Chelan County orchard areas during the blossom season. In some cases fruit farmers pay the beekeepers for this type of pollination service. The most important beekeeping locality is the middle Wenatchee Valley district around Cashmere where a firm provides pollenizing service and markets honey.